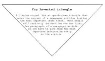
Parts of a Newspaper Article

Newspaper articles have 7 important parts to them:

- **Byline:** The name of the author of the article.
- **Dateline:** A heading that tells where a story is being reported from. (Usually this is where the event took place.)
- **Headline:** The title of article. Usually printed in **bold** letters. The title should be catchy and tell the reader what the article is about.
    - Example:

      VIRTUAL CLASSES ARE CLICKING WITH MORE ALBERTA STUDENTS
- **Lead:** The first few sentences of the story. These lines tell the 4 W's of the story (Who, What, Where, When).
- **Explanation:** After the lead paragraph has been written, the writer must decide what other facts or details the reader might want/need (the WHY and the HOW) to know. The writer must make sure that he/she has enough information to answer any important questions a reader might have after reading the headline and the lead paragraph. This section can also include direct quotes from witnesses or bystanders.
- **Additional Information:** This information is the least important. Thus, if the news article is too long for the space it needs to fill, it can be shortened without rewriting any other part. This part can include information about a similar event. The journalist's opinion should not be expressed in the article—just report the facts.



Headline: **High flying escape ends in death**

Byline: By Robin Sloan, July 14

Dateline: LONDON

Lead paragraph: Icarus, son of the famous inventor, Daedalus, plunged into the Aegean Sea and drowned while attempting to escape from the island of Crete early yesterday afternoon. His body has yet to be recovered.

Explanation: Icarus and his father had made wings from wax and bird feathers they had collected over the years while imprisoned on the island of Crete. They attached the homemade wings to their arms and, using a flapping motion, lifted off from the island shortly before noon. While making their escape, Icarus flew too close to the sun. As a result, the heat melted the wax on his wings which caused the feathers to drop off. The wings collapsed and Icarus fell into the sea and drowned.

Additional Information: Daedalus, sobbing from the distant shore where he had landed safely, said, "My last words to Icarus before we left the island was to stay close and not fly too high! He just didn't listen! Why didn't he listen to me?" Daedalus and Icarus had been held prisoner by King Minos on the island of Crete, and had been forced to build a labyrinth at the palace of Knossos. It was known to be the most difficult maze in the world to navigate successfully.

High flying escape ends in death

By Robin Sloan

LONDON—Icarus, son of the famous inventor, Daedalus, plunged into the Aegean Sea and drowned while attempting to escape from the island of Crete early yesterday afternoon. His body has yet to be recovered.

Icarus and his father had made wings from wax and bird feathers they had collected over the years while imprisoned on the island of Crete. They attached the homemade wings to their arms and, using a flapping motion, lifted off from the island shortly before noon. While making their escape, Icarus flew too close to the sun. As a result, the heat melted the wax on his wings which caused the feathers to drop off. The wings collapsed and Icarus fell into the sea and drowned.

Daedalus, sobbing from the distant shore where he had landed safely, said, "My last words to Icarus before we left the island was to stay close and not fly too high! He just didn't listen! Why didn't he listen to me?" Daedalus and Icarus had been held prisoner by King Minos on the island of Crete, and had been forced to build a labyrinth at the palace of Knossos. It was known to be the most difficult maze in the world to navigate successfully.

When was the story written? ______________________________

Who wrote the story? ______________________________

Where was the story reported from? ______________________________

What happened? ______________________________

Who did it happen to? ______________________________

Where did it happen? ______________________________

When did it happen? ______________________________

How did it happen? ______________________________

The newspaper structure can be broken down into four key sections which includes the headline, byline, the lead, the body, and the tail.

The inverted pyramid

Below is an example of this newspaper structure in the form of an inverted pyramid. This shape is commonly used when displaying a suggested format for a newspaper report. It starts off with the most important information first, with each section containing less important information as the pyramid progresses. This is not to say that the body of the text is not important, but it could not exist without a lead, headline, or byline.

Below you will find each element of the inverted pyramid with information about how to write each component. You could print this out for your learners as a guide for their own writing.

The Headline:

The headline functions to grab the reader's attention while successfully summarising the main point of the article.

Key features of the headline:

- It needs to be short and snappy, which can sometimes mean missing out non-essential words such as 'the', 'a', or 'to'.
- Headlines also need to be eye-catching, which can be achieved by using humour, alliteration, or a pun.
- Write in the present tense even if the event has already happened. This will help to simplify your language choices.
- It should be written in the third person.

The Byline:

The byline is the easiest part of the entire article as it does not require much creativity. It functions to tell the reader who the article is by, what their job role is, and how to find more of their content.

The byline structure:

- Start your byline by inserting your full name after the word 'by'.
- Add your speciality, so you may be a sports reporter, education reporter, or a food writer, for example.
- Then detail how the reader can find more of your opinions or your work, so add in a made-up social media name, such as @JoeBloggs.

An example byline:

- By Joe Bloggs
- Sports Reporter
- Social Media: @Joe.Bloggs

The Lead:

The lead could be seen as the most essential part of the newspaper structure. It should be one paragraph long, and by reading it, your audience should be able to understand exactly what your article is about and what you are reporting on.

Key features of the lead paragraph:

- It needs to be short and snappy so that the message is portrayed clearly. You can achieve this by communicating your message in as little words as possible- just make sure it makes sense.
- The lead paragraph should explain clearly what has happened, so that if your reader stopped reading after the lead, they would understand the main message of your report.
- Stick to using the past tense.
- It should be written in the third person.

The Five Ws (and H)

Another way to make sure that your reader gets the key messages on your report is to stick to the Five Ws in your lead paragraph. These include...

- Who: which people were mainly affected by the events you are reporting on?
- What: what are the key events that happened?
- Where: where did those events take place?
- Why: is there a specific reason why these events occurred?
- When: what was the time, day, month, and year (if necessary) that the events happened?
- How: this isn't strictly a word starting with the letter 'w', but it is useful for your lead paragraph. Explain the manner in which the events occurred, or what made them able to happen.

The Body:

This is the main section of your newspaper article, so it will include lots of important information about what happened, along with more detail about what you said in your lead section. The body should be around 3-4 paragraphs long, depending on how much your teacher has instructed you to write.

Key features of the body:

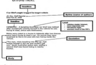
- This is the chance for you to go into as much detail as possible about what happened.
- The most important information about the events should go first.
- Each paragraph should be on a slightly different aspect of what happened.
- It should be written in the third person.
- Explain the background information that is relevant to the story.
- Include evidence, facts, and quotes from people related to the event.
- You could also include a quote from an expert on the topic you are reporting on.

The Tail:

The tail includes the least important information from your report and functions to sum-up the events.

Key features of the tail:

- Add any extra or surrounding information about the event or related topics.
- Include links for where to find extra information about the topic or other news reports.
- You could also feature a quote from an expert or witness to sum up the story or imply what may unfold next.



The Newspaper Caption:

What is a newspaper caption?

They consist of a sentence describing the picture in the article, and how it relates to the topic of the article.

What is a newspaper cut-line?

This can be used underneath the newspaper caption describing what is in the picture. This is more literal and does not need to be stylised like the caption does.

Example newspaper structure

Headline:

Cat flies to the Moon

Byline:

By Joe Bloggs

Space Reporter

Twitter: @Joe.Bloggs

Lead:

At 10am on Tuesday 20th April, Molly the cat flew from Birmingham to the Moon. The event occurred after she grew wings due to eating some gone-off cat food.

Body:

- Paragraph 1 - Explain how Molly managed to get to the Moon and what she did once she was there.
- Paragraph 2 - Introduce Molly in a bit more detail and include opinions and quotes from Molly's owner, and from an animal expert.
- Paragraph 3 - Explain how experts think the cat food resulted in Molly's wing growth.
- Paragraph 4 - Explain how people are trying to help Molly get home to Birmingham on planet Earth.

Tail:

Include a quote from an expert talking about how other animals may be able to fly to the Moon in the future, and link to websites containing information about space travel.

Newspaper structure checklist

Below you will find a checklist to go through once you have finished writing your newspaper article. Use the newspaper structure above, and then use this checklist to double-check you have everything you need for a successful article.

1. A catchy and snappy headline.
2. Byline (name, specialism, social media contact).
3. Newspaper Name.
4. The lead paragraph containing the 5 Ws (and H).
5. The body of the text containing 3-4 paragraphs.
6. Details of the event.
7. Details about who the event affected.
8. Quotes from people involved and from experts.
9. Correct use of punctuation when introducing and closing quotes.
10. The use of third person.
11. The tail including extra information about the topic.